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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/507,613	02/21/2000	James G. Whayne	15916-229x	1854

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EXAMINER

RODRIGUEZ, CRIS LOIREN

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3763

DATE MAILED: 09/18/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

S.M.

Advisory Action	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/507,613	WHAYNE ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Cris L. Rodriguez	3763

--The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

THE REPLY FILED 19 August 2002 FAILS TO PLACE THIS APPLICATION IN CONDITION FOR ALLOWANCE. Therefore, further action by the applicant is required to avoid abandonment of this application. A proper reply to a final rejection under 37 CFR 1.113 may only be either: (1) a timely filed amendment which places the application in condition for allowance; (2) a timely filed Notice of Appeal (with appeal fee); or (3) a timely filed Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in compliance with 37 CFR 1.114.

PERIOD FOR REPLY [check either a) or b)]

- a) The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection.
- b) The period for reply expires on: (1) the mailing date of this Advisory Action, or (2) the date set forth in the final rejection, whichever is later. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of the final rejection.
ONLY CHECK THIS BOX WHEN THE FIRST REPLY WAS FILED WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF THE FINAL REJECTION. See MPEP 706.07(f).

Extensions of time may be obtained under 37 CFR 1.136(a). The date on which the petition under 37 CFR 1.136(a) and the appropriate extension fee have been filed is the date for purposes of determining the period of extension and the corresponding amount of the fee. The appropriate extension fee under 37 CFR 1.17(a) is calculated from: (1) the expiration date of the shortened statutory period for reply originally set in the final Office action; or (2) as set forth in (b) above, if checked. Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of the final rejection, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

1. A Notice of Appeal was filed on _____. Appellant's Brief must be filed within the period set forth in 37 CFR 1.192(a), or any extension thereof (37 CFR 1.191(d)), to avoid dismissal of the appeal.
2. The proposed amendment(s) will not be entered because:
 - (a) they raise new issues that would require further consideration and/or search (see NOTE below);
 - (b) they raise the issue of new matter (see Note below);
 - (c) they are not deemed to place the application in better form for appeal by materially reducing or simplifying the issues for appeal; and/or
 - (d) they present additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims.

NOTE: _____

3. Applicant's reply has overcome the following rejection(s): _____.
4. Newly proposed or amended claim(s) _____ would be allowable if submitted in a separate, timely filed amendment canceling the non-allowable claim(s).
5. The a) affidavit, b) exhibit, or c) request for reconsideration has been considered but does NOT place the application in condition for allowance because: See attachment.
6. The affidavit or exhibit will NOT be considered because it is not directed SOLELY to issues which were newly raised by the Examiner in the final rejection.
7. For purposes of Appeal, the proposed amendment(s) a) will not be entered or b) will be entered and an explanation of how the new or amended claims would be rejected is provided below or appended.

The status of the claim(s) is (or will be) as follows:

Claim(s) allowed: _____

Claim(s) objected to: 14.

Claim(s) rejected: 10-13, 15-37.

Claim(s) withdrawn from consideration: _____

8. The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is a) approved or b) disapproved by the Examiner.
9. Note the attached Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s). _____.

10. Other: IDS filed 7/30/02

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed August 19, 2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
2. In response to Applicant's arguments to the interpretation issues raised by the Office action with respect to the "*strain relief element*", the Examiner directs Applicant's attention to *In re Prater*, 415 F.2d 1393, 1404-05, 162 USPQ 541, 550-51 (CCPA 1969) (Claim 9 was directed to a process of analyzing data generated by mass spectrographic analysis of a gas. The process comprised selecting the data to be analyzed by subjecting the data to a mathematical manipulation. The examiner made rejections under 35 U.S.C. 101 and 102. In the 35 U.S.C. 102 rejection, the examiner explained that the claim was anticipated by a mental process augmented by pencil and paper markings. The court agreed that the claim was not limited to using a machine to carry out the process since the claim did not explicitly set forth the machine. The court explained that "reading a claim in light of the specification, to thereby interpret limitations explicitly recited in the claim, is a quite different thing from reading limitations of the specification into a claim,' to thereby narrow the scope of the claim by implicitly adding disclosed limitations which have no express basis in the claim." The court found that applicant was advocating the latter, i.e., the impermissible importation of subject matter from the specification into the claim.). See also *In re Morris*, 127 F.3d 1048, 1054-55, 44 USPQ2d 1023, 1027-28 (Fed. Cir. 1997) (The court held that the PTO is not required, in the course of prosecution, to interpret claims in applications in the same manner as a court would interpret claims in an infringement suit. Rather, the "PTO applies to verbiage of the proposed claims the broadest reasonable meaning of the words in their ordinary usage as they would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, taking into account whatever enlightenment by way of definitions or otherwise that may be afforded by the written description contained in applicant's specification.").
3. The broadest reasonable interpretation of the claims must also be consistent with the interpretation that those skilled in the art would reach. *In re Cortright*, 165 F.3d 1353,

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1359, 49 USPQ2d 1464, 1468 (Fed. Cir. 1999) (The Board's construction of the claim limitation "restore hair growth" as requiring the hair to be returned to its original state was held to be an unreasonably broad interpretation of the limitation. The court held that, consistent with applicant's disclosure and the disclosure of three patents from analogous arts using the same phrase to require only some increase in hair growth, one of ordinary skill would construe "restore hair growth" to mean that the claimed method increases the amount of hair grown on the scalp, but does not necessarily produce a full head of hair.).

4. While the meaning of claims of issued patents is interpreted in light of the specification, prosecution history, prior art and other claims, this is not the mode of claim interpretation to be applied during examination. During examination, the claims must be interpreted as broadly as their terms reasonably allow. This means that the words of the claim must be given their plain meaning unless applicant has provided a clear definition in the specification. In the present case, Applicant has not provided a definition in the specification, other than designating the element with that name. See *In re Zletz*, 893 F.2d 319, 321, 13 USPQ2d 1320, 1322 (Fed. Cir. 1989) (discussed below). One must bear in mind that, especially in nonchemical cases, the words in a claim are generally not limited in their meaning by what is shown or disclosed in the specification. It is only when the specification provides definitions for terms appearing in the claims that the specification can be used in interpreting claim language. See *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 441, 164 USPQ 619, 622 (CCPA 1970). There is one exception, and that is when an element is claimed using language falling under the scope of 35 U.S.C. 112, 6th paragraph (often broadly referred to as means or step plus function language). In that case, the specification must be consulted to determine the structure, material, or acts corresponding to the function recited in the claim. *In re Donaldson*, 16 F.3d 1189, 29 USPQ2d 1845 (Fed. Cir. 1994) (See MPEP § 2181-§ 2186).

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5. Compare *In re Weiss*, 989 F.2d 1202, 26 USPQ2d 1885 (Fed. Cir. 1993)

(unpublished decision - cannot be cited as precedent) (The claim related to an athletic shoe with cleats that "break away at a preselected level of force" and thus prevent injury to the wearer. The examiner rejected the claims over prior art teaching athletic shoes with cleats not intended to break off and rationalized that the cleats would break away given a high enough force. The court reversed the rejection stating that when interpreting a claim term which is ambiguous, such as a preselected level of force,' we must look to the specification for the meaning ascribed to that term by the inventor." The specification had defined "preselected level of force..." as that level of force at which the breaking away will prevent injury to the wearer during athletic exertion. It should be noted that the limitation was part of a means plus function element.)

6. See *In re Sneed*, 710 F.2d 1544, 218 USPQ 385 (Fed. Cir. 1983) (The applicants had argued in an amendment after final rejection that the term "flexible plastic pipe," as used in the claims, pertained only to pipes of 2-inch diameter and 3-inch diameter and not to a pipe of 1.5 inch diameter. This definition of "flexible" was also advanced in an affidavit. The prior art, however, described 1.5 inch pipe as flexible. The court held that the specification and the evidence (the prior art) failed to support the gloss appellants sought to put on the term "flexible." Note that applicant had not defined "flexible plastic pipe" in the specification.).

7. In response to Applicant's arguments to the 102 rejection, Whayne shows a steering mechanism to pull the steering wires. This mechanism applies strain and releases the strain to the wires in order to create a steerable distal end of the element within device 12. The Examiner use figure 21 as an example to show the control element 152 that's along the exterior surface of the catheter. However, it seems that there is confusion in figure 21 with the references numerals. Reference numeral 12 is pointing out to an interior element within the catheter tube 12 (see also figs 18-20, 22, 23, and 53). Moreover, figures 18-20 and 53

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show that control element is along the exterior surface of the device 130, 144 or 274.

Therefore, it meets the language of the claim.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Cris L. Rodriguez whose telephone number is (703) 308-2194. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 am - 4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Brian Casler can be reached on (703) 308-3552. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-3590 for regular communications and (703) 305-3590 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0858.



Cris L. Rodriguez
Examiner
Art Unit 3763

September 11, 2002



BRIAN L. CASLER
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3700